

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 01338 281331Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W

-----110911 281332Z /43

R 281030Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8857

INFO AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMOASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGUI 1338

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, CT

SUBJ: ARCHBISHOP SPEAKS OUT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SUMMARY: AT A SOLEMN MASS TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE POPE'S CORONATION, THE ARCHBISHOP OF BANGUI MSGR. NDAYEN SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS HARRASSMENT OF CENTRAL AFRICAN PRIESTS. END SUMMARY

1. SPEAKING AT A HIGH MASS ON JUNE 26 BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER, FORMER PRESIDENT DACKO AND A WIDE SELECTION OF MINISTERS AND IMPERIAL COUNCILLORS, THE ARCHBISHOP OF BANGUI MSGR. NDAYEN SAID HIS PRIESTS WERE BEING UNJUSTIFIABLY HARRASSED. ALTHOUGH THEY WERE USED TO SHARING THE SUFFERINGS OF ORDINARY CENTRAL AFRICAN CITIZENS, IT WAS INTOLERABLE THAT THE LOYALTY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN PRIESTS SHOULD BE QUESTIONED AND THAT THEY SHOULD SUFFER ABUSE AT THE HANDS OF THE POLICE. HE CALLED UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO RIGHT THE SITUATION.

2. COMMENT: APPARENTLY THE POLICE HAVE RECENTLY INTERROGATED SEVERAL CENTRAL AFRICAN PRIESTS IN AN EFFORT TO FIND THE AUTHOR
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OF AN ANONYMOUS LETTER TO THE EMPEROR CRITICIZING HIS REGIME AND CHARGING THAT APPOINTMENTS IN THE CHURCH WERE BEING MADE ON RACIAL AND TRIBAL GROUNDS. ACCORDING TO CHURCH OFFICIALS GOVERNMENT MINISTERS HAVE DENIED KNOWING ABOUT THE POLICE ROUND-UP AND IT MAY HAVE BEEN ORDERED DIRECTLY BY THE IMPERIAL COURT. CERTAINLY NDAYEN'S SERMON WILL BE CAREFULLY NOTED AT BERENGO PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN THE EMPEROR NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF THE

CHURCH FOR THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES ATTENDANT ON THE CORONATION. IT IS THEREFORE UNLIKELY THAT DIRECT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST THE ARCHBISHOP, WHO HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS CRITICAL VIEWS OF THE BOKASSA REGIME. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO STEPS TAKEN AGAINST THE HEAD OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, PATRICE ZEMONIAKO, WHEN HE CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT LABOR POLICY SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. (SEE BANGUI 1039). ZEMONIAKO CONTINUES TO BE UNDER HOUSE ARREST. IN ANY EVENT THE ARCHBISHOP'S COURAGEOUS PUBLIC STATEMENT WILL BE SEEN AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF LOCAL DISSATISFACTION WITH BOKASSA'S RULE, WHICH IS LIKELY TO INCREASE FURTHER AS SCARCE RESOURCES ARE DIVERTED INTO CORONATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Litigation History:
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